

## News from GATES...



### President's Message

Greetings!

I know you will join me to usher out 2009 with gusto, as this has undoubtedly been a most challenging year. Not only have our programs and talented staff been at risk, but many of us have family who have experienced job losses, and then many 401ks have become 201ks. Whew, what a year!



My challenge to each of you as we enter 2010 is to continue to rally our forces and spirits. People with disabilities and other obstacles to employment have never needed us more, and you are the voice they need in this troubled economy. I am so proud to see the number of graduates you have put to work ...222 in the first five months of FY10!

DOL / Rehabilitation Services will undoubtedly undergo dramatic changes during 2010, as Peggy Rosser retires and her replacement brings a new style and vision. You are the key to ensure the new leader grasps the essential role CRPs play in DOL's success. Despite challenges on the home front, please stay involved to help GATES influence the system to better change lives for those we serve in 2010.

Peace and best wishes for a very Happy New Year!  
Cheryl

The New Year Brings Budget Reality  
and New Leaders

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### Special Announcements



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**State Use Council Meeting**



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA  
GATES Legislative Consultant

There is just no way to soften how financially tough 2009 was for everyone. For the GATES family of providers, employees, consumers and customers the operating budgets have been paired down and the projections reconsidered many times. The same can be said for the State of Georgia. The state must live under a balanced budget that is only reviewed once a year during the legislative session. So as revenues have shrunk due to decreased tax collection the Governor has had to pull in a tight rein on agency spending and a strong warning of still more hard times to come. So let's look at the numbers.

When the General Assembly adjourned sine die on April 3rd they walked away having cut heavily from the 2009 budget and submitting a budget to the Governor with only a 2% increase for 2010. Basically flat funding since many services were barely keeping up with inflation. The good news is that the Federal Reserve has kept interest rates low and inflation has been stable, with some sectors such as housing, transportation and energy actually experiencing price declines. We will probably close out the year at zero inflation, or close to it. Unfortunately this was the only good news as 2009 came to a close.

What has occurred during the first five months of this fiscal year (FY 2010) is a steady decline in state revenues. Georgia is down 15.4% to date with every month a little deeper than the last or \$1.07 billion total. Revenues for November were down 16.2% compared to November 2008. In real dollars, that is a loss of \$240 million in one month. Governor Perdue started the fiscal year by asking state agencies to tighten their belts and hold back 5% of their allocated expenditures. But that is still 10% off of the current revenue estimate. History shows that government and nonprofit recovery often lags behind the business world. So there is great hope that the revenue picture will improve as we go into the legislative session. It is certain that we will be asked for more cuts.

In Vocation Rehabilitation the Department of Labor submitted their FY 2010 Amended and FY 2011 Budgets to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget for consideration. The Governor directed agency officials to present three budget requests - 4%, 6%, and 8%. The current cut we are looking at in Voc Rehab is for operations, cutting from \$891,665 to \$1,827,396 (FY 2010 Senate Budget Office Human Development Amended 26-27). The details of these operational cuts are not currently defined. In the FY 2011 budget proposal we see a similar level of cuts to operation but a complete transfer of Voc Rehab Programs to a new area named Workforce Services Program were it combines all veterans, disability, independent living, WIA and unemployment services under one category (FY 2011 Senate Human Development Budget pages 24-25). GATES President Cheryl Cornett-Earley and Legislative Consultant Dawn Randolph will be meeting with Voc Rehab leadership as well as members of the budget committees to fully understand these requests and make appropriate evaluations of their impact. Stay tuned for further developments.

January 24, 2010  
10 AM  
Sloppy Floyd West  
Tower, room 1816B

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**GATES  
Board of Directors  
Meeting**

February 5, 2010  
9:30 AM  
Location TBD

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*THE PORTAL* is a regular publication of GATES. If you have staff or others associated with your organization that you would like to receive *THE PORTAL*, please send their email address to: Charles Hall, [chall@asginfo.net](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)

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Who will lead and direct the review and discussion of Georgia's financial obligations and lay a sustainable foundation for the new decade? All revenue and expenditure bills begin with the House of Representatives. The Georgia State House was rocked by scandal as Speaker Glenn Richardson resigned his position and seat in early December, effective January 1st. The House Republican Caucus met on Thursday, December 17, 2009 to consider how to proceed in the upcoming session. A few Republican Representatives put their names forward for leadership positions. Rep. David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge) emerged as the choice for Speaker. The caucus also supported Rep. Jan Jones (R-Alpharetta) for Speaker Pro Tem and Ed Lindsey (R-Atlanta) replacing Rep. Jan Jones as majority whip. It is anticipated there will need to be some changes in committee chairs because of this movement. However, Rep. Ralston doesn't anticipate a complete overhaul, but more of realignment.

Rep. Ralston has made very strong commitment to change the environment at the Capitol and support a more open government with a more democratic operation of the House. He intends to eliminate the "Hawk" system that gave the current Speaker unprecedented power to stack a committee to vote his pleasure. Ralston also would like a fair process when considering legislation on the House Floor. In an e-mail to colleagues before the caucus meeting he committed to ending the strict tactics in the Rules Committee to control debate on a measure.

In the background will be the upcoming elections for all officials in Georgia State Government, from the Governor down. Senator Eric Johnson (R-Savannah) resigned his seat in early fall to commit his time to raising money and running for Governor. As December closed out Secretary of State Karen Handel announced she would be resigning her seat and committing to a full time run for Governor. There are currently seven announced candidates for the Republican primary and four for the Democrat's primary.

The General Assembly begins January 11, 2010 with major concern over the fiscal condition of the state, annoyance at the ethical lapses that have surfaced at the end of 2009 and Georgia faced with a struggling economy plagued with jobless citizens. We expect the legislature to be confronted with these issues and more as 2010 begins. Elected official will want to connect with their constituents while making a safe exit from the session to enter the election season. I predict we will hear many more accusations, rumors and revelations as the session progresses. The real challenge will be to communicate the real needs of people with disabilities and convince everyone of the importance to invest in a strong community structure of services. The New Year may bring challenges, but it will also bring opportunities as the playing field will level for those representing everyday citizens and the challenges they confront to live a productive life on Main Street.

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## Public Input Sought Statewide

for the Vocational Rehabilitation

State Plan and the State Plan for Independent Living



The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Statewide Independent Living Council, Inc (SILC), in collaboration with the Georgia Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation Program, will hold a series of joint public hearings statewide to obtain input on the needs for vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living (IL) services leading to greater independence and employment for people with disabilities.

The Georgia VR and IL programs are required to submit plans to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of how Georgia will use federal and state funds to provide a wide array of rehabilitation services to achieve priority goals and objectives in FY 2011-2013. The public hearings are opportunities for citizens to provide valuable input for those plans.

RSA is the federal agency responsible for administrative and fiduciary oversight for VR and IL funding disbursed by the United States Congress.

Citizens attending the hearing who wish to comment for the record will be limited to five minutes; no extended two-way dialogue is permitted. Those who wish to comment but cannot attend the hearing in person may send written statements of no more than two (2) pages, double-spaced to:

Linda Shepard, SRC Chair  
c/o Parents Educating Parents & Professionals, Inc.  
3680 Kings Highway, Douglasville, GA 30135  
Email: shepard.linda@peppinc.org  
OR  
Patricia Puckett, Executive Director  
Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia  
755 Commerce Drive, Suite 415  
Decatur, GA 30033  
Email: ppuckett@silcga.org

Written or emailed comments must be postmarked no later than Friday, January 22, 2010.

The Georgia SRC and the Georgia SILC will hold hearings in four separate locations to solicit comments from a representative and diverse population. The date, time and location for each public hearing are as follows:

Tuesday, January 12: Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for

Rehabilitation, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Roosevelt Auditorium, 6135 Roosevelt Highway, Warm Springs, GA. Contact for directions: 706-655-5000

Wednesday, January 13: Rome, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Etowah-Oostanaula Room, Rome-Floyd County Library, 205 Riverside Parkway, NE. Contact for directions: 706-295-6407

Thursday, January 14: Atlanta, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel, Atlanta Room 3 & 4, 4736 Best Road, Atlanta. Contact for directions: 404-762-7676

Friday, January 15: Athens, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Georgia Department of Labor Career Center, Oglethorpe-Oconee Room, 150 Evelyn C. Neely Drive. Contact for directions: 706-354-3900

In addition to holding in-person public hearings and providing outlets for written and emailed comments, a survey instrument soliciting feedback will be available on or about January 11, 2010, at the SRC web site, [www.srcgeorgia.com](http://www.srcgeorgia.com), the SILC web site, [www.silcga.org](http://www.silcga.org), and the PEPP web site, [www.peppinc.org](http://www.peppinc.org).

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## Shawn Pursley Joins Staff as State Use Program Coordinator

In November Shawn Pursley joined GATES as the State Use Program Coordinator for Georgia Enterprises for Products and Services. Shawn brings extensive project management and marketing experience to the position. He holds an M.B.A. from Brenau University, a Master's Certification in Project Management and a Bachelor of Science degree from Berry College.



His career accomplishments include 5 years of experience with Lockheed Martin Energy Systems, 8 years with Lucent Technologies where he served as both a Product Manager and a Program Manager utilizing his problem-solving and coordination skills. For the past four years he served as a Marketing Manager for the Belts and Gearmotors Division of Habasit America.

Charles Hall, GATES CEO, said, "I am very pleased to have someone with Shawn's background and experience join the GATES team. After working with Shawn over the past 6-7 weeks I am confident we have the 'right' person in the 'right' position to help grow the State Use Program for our GATES members and to better serve Georgians with disabilities."

Shawn and his wife Tamara, have three children, Connor (6), Jackson (4) and Tyler (7 months). Please give Shawn a call at 404-521-1777 if

you have questions or need more information about Georgia Enterprises and the State Use Program.

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## Call for Information

*THE PORTAL* is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, [chall@asginfo.net](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)



## GATES

*Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports*

44 Broad Street  
Suite 503  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: 404-523-6674

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